

Category	CWLA Recommendation	Current DCF Practice	Next Steps – Completion Date July 31, 2014
<b>RIGHTS OF CHILDREN</b>			
	Revise written materials and training to clarify that the agency's primary responsibility is to protect children and to make decisions in their best interest.	<p>The Department of Children and Families is charged with protecting children from abuse and neglect and strengthening families.</p> <p>DCF's primary mission is to protect children. Efforts to strengthen families are conducted with the end goal that a stronger family will yield a stronger child.</p> <p>There are currently more than 7,000 children in foster care across Massachusetts and more than 40,000 children in all served by the Department.</p>	<p>DCF will revise its mission statement to clarify the primary purpose is to protect children, and to affirm that decisions made by the agency are intended to reflect the best interests of children.</p> <p>In addition, the Department will collaborate with partners to launch public awareness campaigns in order to protect children and educate the public.</p>
	DCF should determine which homes with children in care currently approved through a background check waiver process should be subject to heightened case monitoring.	Central Office is conducting reviews of case files for homes with waivers to determine which homes should receive increased supports and management review.	<p>DCF will complete its review of current homes with a background check waiver to ensure all placements remain appropriate and in the best interest of the child.</p> <p>If DCF determines as part of this review that continued placement would be harmful to the child, then removal proceedings would commence immediately.</p> <p>Additionally, the Department will identify those homes where additional supports and management-level</p>

			<p>review would be in the best interest of the child.</p> <p>The supports and review will include quarterly reviews by management. Supports may include more home visits or an increase to support services.</p>
	DCF should develop clear protocols for evaluating risks to children living at home using Structured Decision Making tools and safety assessments to assist workers.	The Department has a mandatory risk assessment tool. The tool is built in to the Department's database system and requires social workers to assess neglect factors, abuse factors and protective capacities.	<p>Managers and trainers will present the Structured Decision Making tool to staff.</p> <p>The Department will conduct reviews to monitor quality implementation.</p> <p>Managers will be provided reports on compliance rates.</p>
<b>SHARED RESPONSIBILITY AND LEADERSHIP</b>			
	Ensure that staff at all levels of leadership have the appropriate competencies, knowledge and experience.	DCF seeks and hires qualified and experienced individuals to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children.	<p>The Department will continue to aggressively recruit and hire qualified candidates to the workforce with the appropriate competencies, knowledge and experience. Specifically, DCF will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit at the June National Association of Social Workers Job Fair;</li> <li>• Develop a staffing plan that includes enhanced forecasting of attrition as a factor; and</li> <li>• Draft a proposal for social worker licensing requirements to be negotiated with the union.</li> </ul>

ENGAGEMENT/ PARTICIPATION			
	Develop visit protocols to assist workers in engaging with children and families during visits.	As of February 2014 the timely client contact rate was 92.4%	In June, the Department will begin deploying 2,000 mobile tablets to the field to allow for real-time data entry.
	Enforce expectation for timely documentation of visits/contacts within 30 days.	The Department currently requires workers to enter dictation on visits/contacts within 30 days.	<p>Real-time data entry will enable us to continue improving compliance with documentation of social worker visits and contacts with children in our care and custody.</p> <p>Additionally, we will develop visit protocols to ensure consistent and valuable observations from each visit.</p>
	Address inconsistent implementation and concerns regarding DCF's case practice model.	DCF leadership acknowledges the inconsistent application of the model across the area offices.	<p>DCF will develop and execute against an implementation plan for the practice model that will include all elements identified by CWLA.</p> <p>DCF will develop an assessment tool for managers and supervisors. The tool will communicate key practices and expectations – and provide for quality review and assurance.</p>
SUPPORT AND SERVICES			
	Finalize and implement draft policy on case transfers, to establish a more seamless approach when it is necessary to transfer cases from one social worker to another.	DCF has developed a draft policy on case transfers to ensure face-to-face meetings when cases are transferred within or between offices.	DCF will work with SEIU 509 to issue a final Case Transfer policy that requires face-to-face interaction when cases are transferred.
	Require a brief assessment for vulnerabilities that could place each	The Department has contracted with a consultant to	DCF will employ the findings from the review, of 200 cases from 10 offices

	child at heightened risk for running away.	implement best practices around runaway prevention.	and assess the viability of runaway prevention tool.
	Establish an expert panel of MDs from a variety of disciplines and areas of practice who can provide support and consultation to staff and medical personnel who are working on difficult cases.	The Department currently consults with medical doctors on individual cases when necessary.	DCF will work with the Kitchen Cabinet to develop a panel who can provide support and consultation to staff and medical personnel who are working on difficult cases.
<b>WORKFORCE</b>			
	Area offices should establish peer support teams that can assist colleagues in dealing with secondary trauma.	Several area offices have strong peer support groups.	<p>The Department will identify area offices that current have strong peer support teams, and develop a model to implement at each area office to ensure staff dealing with secondary trauma are supported.</p> <p>DCF leadership will solicit input from employees to determine what other methods may be helpful.</p>
	Review supervisors and managers to ensure they have received training and demonstrated competencies required for the respective positions.	The Commonwealth conducts annual reviews of all management level positions.	<p>DCF will develop, post and fill 2 new key staff positions within the training institute: a professional development manager and program coordinator.</p> <p>These positions will lead the design and implementation of a supervision model and training program. DCF will also design and conduct a supervision needs assessment for all existing managers and staff to identify practices that can be improved through the new model and training.</p>
	Every employee should have regularly scheduled supervision.	The Department expects group and/or 1:1 supervision to take place in each area office.	The Department will work with the Child Welfare Institute to identify best practice models for area office supervision. DCF will implement

			consistent expectations for supervision as part of the redefining of the practice model.
	Legislature should approve sufficient funding for the Department.	The Governor, House and Senate have all proposed additional funding for the Department.	The Department will communicate with the Legislature on anticipated funding needs.